

Dear Honorable Members of the Commerce Committee,

I care about animals and I vote. I oppose HB 5263, An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption. *This bill goes in the wrong direction.* Medical science now is all about plant-based diets.

I do not want to see my tax dollars used to promote the killing of rabbits. They are smart and sociable with unique personalities, like your dog or cat.

Public demand has caused many cosmetic companies no longer test on rabbits, many furriers no longer produce coats made from rabbit pelts, and laws have been passed that have stopped the sale of commercially bred rabbits in pet stores. PetSmart and Petco no longer sell rabbits. Vigorous public outcry stopped Whole Foods and other stores from selling rabbit meat.

And would we be playing with fire again? HB 5263 could spread *Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV)*, a highly transmissible and fatal disease for wild and domestic rabbits that is spreading across the country.

In light of the emerging viral threats that jump the species barrier from animals to humans, Connecticut's Department of Agriculture should instead be promoting plant-based markets, including expansion and innovation of plant-based proteins (and eventually cultivated meat), to ensure a greater availability of more diverse, safe, and dependable protein sources.

Thanking you for your attention and concern,

Julie E Lewin